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From: L+P G [mailto:tmaker256@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, April 06, 2012 9:51 PM
To: Baskin, Kathleen (EEA)
Subject: DEP's "safe yield" proposal for Westfield River

Kathleen.baskin@state.ma.us
April 6, 2012

RE: DEP's "safe yield" proposal for Westfield River

Dear Ms. Baskin:

I understand that state authorities have proposed new "safe yield" withdrawal limits that are more than double the total amount currently being withdrawn for human use in the Westfield River watershed. I also understand that the 20-year Water Management Act withdrawal permits are due to expire this year, and are about to be renewed. I am concerned that unless the safe yield is set at a truly safe and sustainable level, the Westfield River will be exposed to excessive withdrawals for the next 20 years. In my opinion, a truly safe and sustainable level would help encourage water conservation and relieve current stress on our important and precious water resources here in the Westfield River watershed.

For your information, during my first visit (mid-September 2006) to the Agawam shoreline of the Westfield River, I was really surprised to see so little water in the river. The water was so low that one could easily walk across to the other side. In fact, the friends that were with me did walk across while I remained nearer the shoreline. While sitting on a large rock in the river while waiting for my friends to return, along the shoreline I noticed several fresh water mussel shells with some still unopened and looking dried out (apparently from no water and plenty of sun). While sitting, I wondered where the fish were and whether any fish could survive the nearly dry riverbed. I thought about the Indians of long ago that lived along the shores of the river and used the river for navigating and fishing...hoping that they never had to experience a dry riverbed. While sitting there, I also wondered how insects, dragonflies and animals who so

depended on the river water were managing. Regarding using the river for recreation, I felt sadness for those who would have liked to kayak/canoe on the river, but couldn't because of the lack of water.

Since my memorable first visit to the Westfield River, I have learned that during dry weather it is pretty common to see the river in the Agawam area with scarcely enough water (if your lucky) to float a kayak. Why it has to be this way, I don't know. I suspect that not enough water is being released from the water held upstream. Today, I fear that DEP's "new" safe yield proposal will expose the Westfield River to unsafe and excessive withdrawals for many years to come.

In closing, I request that common sense prevail during the decision making process and that the safe yield be set at a truly safe and sustainable level.

Thank you for reading this.

Lucy Gionfriddo
Agawam, MA